

STRATEGY
RESEARCH
PROJECT

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

CHINA:

FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN A MOST FAVORED NATION

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL MELVIN R. VAN DYKE
United States Army

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:

Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

19980511 147

DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED

USAWC CLASS OF 1998

U.S. ARMY WAR COLLEGE, CARLISLE BARRACKS, PA 17013-5050



USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

CHINA:

FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN A MOST FAVORED NATION

by

LTC Melvin R. Van Dyke

CH (COL) John W. Brinsfield
Project Advisor

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A:
Approved for public release.
Distribution is unlimited.

U.S. Army War College
CARLISLE BARRACKS, PENNSYLVANIA 17013

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Melvin R. Van Dyke, LTC, U.S. Army
TITLE: China: Freedom of Religion in a Most Favored Nation
FORMAT: USAWC Strategy Research Project
DATE: 06 April 1998 PAGES: 36 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

China's position on human rights and its status in the world economic community are interrelated. This paper examines the relationship with a focus on freedom of religion. The premise is that China is repeating the classical revolutionary paradigm wherein the insecure revolutionary government establishes control over all social institutions and then begins to relax control as confidence is gained. China's need to develop a competitive global economy and to play its rightful role as a responsible member of the international community will hasten the acceptance of freedom of religion as an inalienable right. The U.S. must continue to press China for religious freedom through all avenues including prudent economic engagement policy to facilitate China's progress toward that end.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ABSTRACT | III |
| CHINA: FREEDOM OF RELIGION IN A MOST FAVORED NATION..... | 1 |
| ENDNOTES | 27 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | 29 |

**"FREEDOM OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF IS NOT FREEDOM FOR
RELIGION"**

The Xinjiang Daily, 18 May 1996

The United States has an overarching interest in China's development as a stable, open and peaceful state and in its role as a responsible member of the international community. China's relations with other nations and its conduct in respect to international rules, norms, and standards will influence its own political and economic development.¹

The Chinese economy thrived during the 1980's under the financial reforms instituted by China's Paramount Leader, Deng Xiaoping. Accompanying the economic revitalization was a marked relaxation in political restraints imposed on the citizenry. Human rights conditions generally improved, including a resurgence in open religious belief and practice. However, the very reforms which fueled the free market economic growth and social freedoms weakened the strict central political controls of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP).

Pressure mounted for greater freedoms and pro-democracy sentiment was openly displayed. The culmination was the severe government crackdown in 1989 on protesters assembled in Tiananmen Square. This event and the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991

convinced CCP leaders that the revolution was in jeopardy and they must return to more forceful government controls. As a result both the economic and social progress that had been made suffered. The economy recovered to some extent, but human rights oppression, especially freedom of religion, continues to hold China back from full integration into the world community.

China's position on human rights and its status in the world community are interrelated. This paper examines the relationship with a focus on freedom of religion and with the premise that China is repeating the classical revolutionary paradigm wherein the insecure revolutionary government establishes control over all social institutions and then, as confidence is established, begins to relax controls over imposed restrictions. This pattern is not unique in China's history nor that of other countries with revolutionary government. What is unique is the degree to which freedom of religion is involved in the international acceptance of China as a world partner. Finally, China's necessity to evolve a progressive, competitive global economy will force it to improve its record on recognition and acceptance of freedom of religion as an inalienable right.

BACKGROUND

China's cultural context is the result of centuries of dynastic rule, each with its own agenda, but always imposing strict allegiance to the emperor; enforced through a hierarchy of bureaucratic systems. China developed as an agriculturally based society with a strong extended family devoutly obedient to the patriarch. It was greatly influenced by the teachings of Confucius, which emphasized social stability, obedience, and respect to authority. Because patterns of authority were repeated throughout the hierarchy, the emperor and his officials simply assumed the role of the father at large. The emperor was described as the "Son of Heaven" which gave him the right to rule the world and the population was conditioned to subjugation to authority. Despite numerous invasions by its neighbors and internal rebellions China's cultural context remained relatively unchanged. Invaders were either assimilated into the culture, or repelled, and rebellions were generally squashed by military intervention.

Dynastic rule ended with the Qing, or Manchu, dynasty (1644-1912). During this period occurred the Taiping Rebellion (1850-1864), the seminal event that shaped the Chinese government's disdain toward religion, and specifically Christianity, an attitude that continues to this day.² The Taiping Rebellion

began with a schoolmaster named Hong Xiuquan who became influenced by a Christian missionary in 1836. Through his visions and study of Protestant religious tracts Hong became convinced that he was the brother of Jesus and had been called by God. He proceeded to proselytize and baptize converts throughout China. Hong was able to attract a large following of believers in a monotheistic faith of mostly Christian framework with parts of Confucianism added. Hong converted thousands of believers, eventually spreading his faith and control throughout nearly half of China. Adding impetus to join the movement was the economic hardship and famine occurring in the region. As the Taiping religion grew, it amassed great wealth which was shared with its followers. Initially the Qing government ignored Hong's activities. However, as the movement grew, it pursued takeover of territories through military operations, and became critical of the government due to its lack of effective economic and social programs. The movement evolved into an anti-Qing rebellion and challenged the very authority of the government. Although strong in numbers and motivated by religious fervor, Hong's forces were poorly organized and lacked adequate leadership. After some initial success, the rebels were defeated and by 1864 Qing was back in control of former Taiping-held territories. Although victorious, the extended rebellion seriously weakened the Qing government and contributed to its downfall.³

END OF DYNASTIC RULE

For centuries China had viewed itself as essentially superior to other nations and, consistent with its cultural context, remained a relatively isolated, closed society. This kept China from advancing with its contemporaries and exposed it to the pressures of the outside world. China's isolationist attitude, weak and poorly equipped military, lack of industrialization, and failing infrastructure made it extremely vulnerable. By the early 1900's China was clearly behind the development of the modern world. Western powers were able to take

s weakness and forcibly opened its coastal
xploitation. Internally China was in decline,
peasant insurrection and anti-government
ion against the ruling Qing dynasty occurred
in 1910 and by 1912 the last emperor had abdicated ending over
3000 years of dynastic rule. The void left by the absence of an
emperor of a named dynasty deeply and adversely affected the
political, social and economic developments occurring in China.
The newly formed Nationalist party, or Kuomintang, survived the
internal struggles for power to gain control of the government.
However, the Kuomintang faced growing opposition from a new but
growing faction inside itself, the Communists. Following World
War I China perceived a betrayal by the United States at the

Versailles Treaty Conference regarding negotiations with Japan. The United States was to support China in mitigation of differences between the two countries. However, Japan postured itself in a manner that caused the United States to withdraw support of China. This extinguished the motivation that China had in looking to the West for ideas and constructs for China's reform. The Chinese shifted interest more and more to the revolutionary events occurring in the Soviet Union and the Marxist-Leninist inspired Communist ideology. The Chinese Communist party was organized in 1921 and members were admitted to the Koumintang. However by 1928 the Koumintang, now under the leadership of General Chiang Kai-shek, believed the Communists were becoming too strong and undermining the course he wanted to take. Chiang attempted to unify China by a bloody purging of the Communists from Koumintang membership. This only succeeded in driving the Communists underground and to the countryside where they would build their base of power.⁴

RISE OF COMMUNISM

Japan's invasion of China in 1931 put the two countries into full fledged war with each other that lasted until the end of World War II. The Kuomintang, which had never achieved a unified China, was greatly weakened by the tolls of the war and had lost the confidence of the people. Now it faced a fight with the Communists. Leadership was disjointed, military forces were insufficient and disorganized, and the economy was paralyzed. The surrender of Japan after W.W.II and its expulsion from China opened the door to communist control of the country. The ensuing civil war and unrest among the populace led to further embracement of communist ideology under the tutelage of Mao Zedong, a founding member of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). Mao's communist forces had become close to the peasantry during the war years. They were impressed by the communist's discipline and commitment and began to regard them as the country's defenders. The Communists offered a new way of government but with a familiarity that had been ingrained from centuries of dynastic rule and Confucianism; stability, authority, obedience and security.

Despite aid from the United States to prop up the Kuomintang government, the fierce fighting ended with the Communists the victor. The party officials of the Kuomintang government fled

the country to nearby Taiwan. On 1 October 1949 Mao Zedong established the People's Republic of China (PRC), a Communist state. In 1954 the party instituted a constitution which confirmed the legitimacy of the PRC Communist government and centralized government control under the party. Mao introduced numerous socialist reforms almost immediately. Included in his reconstruction of the society were the equalization of women with men, denouncement of familial ties as feudal and the concept that obedience to the party and its leader, Mao, transcended the traditional Confucian order. Young Chinese were to look to the government and party rather than family for security and leadership. All of these concepts were a reversal of the Chinese cultural context except obedience to authority, upon which Mao capitalized through any means necessary to impose his will and further implement the communist ideology.

The basic aim of the Communist government was to create a socialist society. Mao established Marxist-Leninist education programs and relied on extensive use of propaganda. The government also resorted to terrorist activities to eliminate opposition. From October 1949 to October 1950 reports indicated that more than 1 million dissidents were executed. Some authorities estimated that number to have increased to nearly 2 million by the end of 1951.

One of the first tasks accomplished by the Chinese Communist party was the elimination of religion. Foreign missionaries were

expelled from the country and organized religion was eradicated. There could be no allegiance to any institution other than the party.

The dominant religions in China had been Confucianism, Taoism, and, to a lesser extent, Buddhism. Confucianism, the most dominant, widespread religion, was a belief system with a quasi-secular basis that seemed to the people not to be compromised by Communist thought since the aims of stability, concern for the people and obedience appeared to be in consonance. Taoism and especially Buddhism were more regional with regard to followers and thus easier to attack. The people were affected by all three prominent religions but any one lacked overwhelming support in the face of the Communist propaganda machine. The party's actions met with little resistance. Christianity and Islam also had a presence in China but they were easily subdued by the Communist regime. Most churches, temples and schools were converted for secular purposes and any that remained were placed under control of Chinese clerics loyal to the party.

With the populace supporting him, and the Communist party firmly in control, Mao turned his attention to reviving the economy which had deteriorated to an all time low. The first five-year plan included drastic measures to stop inflation and improve the infrastructure necessary for economic development. The focus was on development of heavy industry at the expense of

consumer goods, and was carried out with Soviet aid and technical assistance.

Five years later Mao began a second plan known as the Great Leap Forward. This plan was inspired by the apparent success of the Soviet Union's actions to forge a strong economic presence through government directed production. More rigid controls were imposed on the economy in order to speed up industrialization and production while reducing consumption. Mao hoped in 15 years to bring China to the level of industrialization in the Western World by establishing enormous communes to produce goods, especially steel, in quotas set by the government. The plan was poorly thought out and had inadequate controls. The unrealistic quotas resulted in falsification of production reports and inferior products that could not be sold or traded. The economy neared collapse and the people, diverted from their normal productivity, were in many regions gripped by famine. Industrial production dropped by as much as 50 percent in the first few years the plan was in effect.

The situation worsened in 1960 when the Soviets withdrew economic assistance and technical support. Differences had grown between China and the USSR as the Soviets moved to a more amiable relationship with the West for economic reasons. Mao let the Great Leap quietly fade in 1960 and called upon his close ally, Deng Xiaoping, to restore the economy. Under Deng the economy stabilized and industrial production actually grew.

In 1966 Mao feared that Deng and his associates were straying from the socialist ideology. Differences grew between Mao and intellectuals, professionals and bureaucrats. Mao wanted to follow through with implementation of a pure Communist ideology while others favored a more rational, temperate approach designed to encourage economic efficiency and growth.

Determined to revitalize the revolution, Mao instituted the Cultural Revolution to align the population with communist ideals. The objective was to destroy old thoughts, culture, customs and habits. Deng was removed from his position and banished to the countryside, as were his allies. Universities and schools were closed and their students sent to farms or pressed into the Red Guards, which beat and tortured intellectuals, managers, administrators or anyone else whose position or thinking offended the leaders of the revolution.

The Red Guards also destroyed the places of worship that still existed as well as monasteries, monuments and works of art linked to China's past. Christians and other believers were persecuted and many were executed. Books were destroyed and all media was under the control of the government which only allowed Maoist teachings to be released. While the wealthy and intellectual were killed, persecuted, "re-educated" or banished, peasants and the working class were touted as models. The result was to eliminate any appearance of success or productivity among the population.

By the beginning of the 1970's anarchy prevailed and conflict erupted within the ranks of the Red Guards themselves. The army was brought in to control the chaos and in 1973 Mao restored Deng to his office to once again restore the economy. After Mao's death in 1976 Deng came into power and was determined to rectify the damage the Cultural Revolution had inflicted.

COMMUNISM-ECONOMY-RELIGION

The greatest challenge facing Deng was the restoration of the Chinese economy, which had again collapsed. Deng approached this by dismantling the communes and gradually restoring confidence in the people by allowing them greater freedom in production of goods and conduct of business. Although not yet a free market economy the reforms allowed the workers to benefit from profits which further stimulated production and the economy. In addition to the internal reforms Deng also recognized the importance of bringing China into the world economy if it were going to progress. Inroads to this end had been made 1971 when China was admitted to the United Nations and in 1972 when visited by President Richard M. Nixon who initiated full diplomatic relations between China and the United States. Mao had not capitalized on these events, but Deng did. During this period China's foreign relations improved dramatically and the country began to prosper.

Accompanying the economic prosperity was the liberalization of attitudes toward freedom of religion in China. The connection between freedom of religion, human rights in general, and acceptance in the global economy was evident. The world's greatest economic powers and potential trading partners with China would respond more favorably economically if China

demonstrated progress in human rights freedom. Deng understood that in order to be a participant in the world economy certain human rights concessions had to be made.

With China's constitution of 1978 official support was given for the "free" conduct of formal religion. However, the constitution also provided that the Chinese people had the right to abstain from religious beliefs and to further atheism. Further gains for religious freedom were made with the constitution of 1982 which proclaimed freedom of religious belief and allowed state defined, legitimate, religious activities. After that many churches, temples and mosques reopened and although these had to be registered with and monitored by the government, religious worship became more open. By the mid-80's China's economy was booming and it seemed that the socialist free market economy and liberalization of policies on religion were at last on the right track. Unfortunately, this was not to continue.

Ironically, the very reforms that Deng had sponsored to revive the nation resulted in a response from the population that was unacceptable to the Communists and could not be tolerated. To further the reform process the leadership needed to decentralize power, relinquishing control that for so long had been solely in possession of party bureaucracy. As the decentralization occurred the party's ability to influence local government and maintain control decreased. Corruption became

pervasive among party officials and those in privileged positions exploited the growing economy for personal gain.

The perceived economic inequality and new freedoms granted to the Chinese resulted in growing demands by the people for greater freedoms, more involvement in and benefits from the economic reforms, and greater independence. Even worse, the unrest spawned a pro-democracy movement that threatened the communist ideology.

In June, 1989 demonstrations reached a peak with a massive protest in Tiananmen Square. The Communists reacted by sending 10,000 soldiers into the streets shooting indiscriminately at the protesters, most of whom were unarmed. By the end of the day nearly thousands of people were reportedly killed. Clearly the Communist Party had no intention of further relinquishing power.

The economy reflected the negative results of the crackdown in its growth which fell to half of the previous year's rate. Later, the economy would improve, but the prospects for religious freedom were not so bright.

A second blow against freedom of religion occurred with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The Chinese Communists noted with great concern the role Christian religion played in contributing to the downfall of the Soviet Communist government. They were convinced of this relationship and, fearing the Christian presence in their own country, were determined for it not to be repeated in China.

Although the constitutional provision for freedom of religious belief still existed the government interpretation was now to emphasize "patriotism" in all religious functions. Religious freedom did not mean that anything can be done in the name of religion and religious activities must be within the provisions of the Constitution and the law. Obviously the authorities' intent was to reinforce control over religious activities and to repress those determined to threaten the "unity" of the country. Religion was viewed as a threat to national security due to its close alliance with the cultural and national identity of ethnic groups. Many government officials were convinced that there was intent to use religion to subvert the state.

The government moved quickly to tighten controls on religious activities. Registration of places of worship, formerly spotty in enforcement, received new emphasis. The regulations pertaining to registration of religious groups applied to all faiths but was particularly applied to Christian house churches. Registration was seen by many believers as submission to the government and its Religious Affairs Bureau which was incompatible with the beliefs of their faith. Therefore, numerous churches did not register. Failure to register was considered illegal and those involved were punished, often severely, and religious materials were confiscated.

The pattern of the crackdown lends credence to the thesis that the new phenomena, more rapid growth in

church than in party membership and new ties among different dissident constituencies, have accounted for the escalating crackdown. From early 1994 through November 1995, repetitive instances of detentions, physical abuse, and exorbitant fines, followed by releases tended to occur in areas where foreigners actively proselytized and trained local lay leaders in doctrine and evangelical methodology. They also occurred where evidence of indigenous networks of unofficial churches surfaced or where native evangelists were especially active. "Underground" or "house" church members who challenged party and government authority through public worship were targeted. Churches, official or unofficial, that attracted too much attention through their size or wealth or prestige, or through the caliber of their leaders, were subject to repression. Also victimized were cohesive religious communes which competed successfully against a party or government institution for the loyalty of the local populace.⁵

Many unregistered churches voluntarily closed or terminated meetings for fear of reprisals. The government closed hundreds of other house churches. Many members of these groups were detained, fined, investigated, beaten, imprisoned or sentenced to "reform through education" programs. Among the many individual examples of these horrific events reported by human rights groups are the following from late 1996 and 1997: "Armed police raided a house church in Zhaosu County, Xinjiang Province. Witnesses claimed worshipers were severely beaten and burned with boiling water for not following directions." "A 30 year old pastor and his congregation were arrested in south China. The members were fined and released but their leader was held for two months, during which time he was severely beaten." "Officials of Zhejiang Province have implemented a campaign to eliminate the

construction of unauthorized temples and churches. In the city of Ningbo alone, authorities destroyed 3,000 houses of worship they say were built without government approval." "A Christian doctor from Beijing, Xu Yonghai, was arrested along with other activists after signing a petition. He is accused of smearing the government. His family did not know where he was being held until his sentence of three years of re-education through labor at the Xicheng detention center was announced."⁶

Certain categories of people were forbidden from holding religious beliefs including persons under age 18, family members of Party members, and family members of persons in positions of influence, government or private. Communist Party policy termed religious belief as incompatible with party membership. This placed serious limitations on religious believers because party membership is required for nearly all upper level positions in government and state controlled businesses. Regulations were established to prevent foreigners from establishing their own organizations, and proselytizing was banned. Even preaching was against the law unless invited by a registered religious organization. Registered places of worship were subjected to strict government approval requirements including evaluation of their clergy who had to demonstrate "political reliability". Government control also extended to the education of Christian and other clergy. Those in religious training now had to pass an examination on their political knowledge in order to qualify for

a position in a registered religious organization.

In spite of the repression, believers have recently increased in number, though much of their activity was driven underground. Ironically, the repressive actions of the government itself may have been responsible for the growth.

The persecution of the Christians, and repression of other religions, had another effect. By the early 1990's the plight of the Chinese Christians and the conditions of religious repression had gained the attention of Christians, human rights organizations, business and community leaders and government officials in the United States (U.S.) and other countries. Together they have formed a coalition to campaign for an end to the repression through unilateral and multilateral diplomatic efforts and other interventions. Among the more effective strategies has been to apply pressure on China through economic channels. China's response has been to steadfastly point to its constitutional provision for religious freedom. However, China's definition of religious freedom is at odds with the conventional, globally accepted definition.

A key problem is the Chinese governments definition of freedom of religion as the right to private belief, rather than accepting freedom of religion in the broader context set forth in a key United Nations resolution called the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. That declaration states that freedom of religion includes among other things the right to assemble with others, to maintain appropriate charitable or humanitarian institutions, to write, issue and disseminate relevant publications, to teach a religion or belief in an

appropriate place, to solicit and receive voluntary contributions, to train, appoint, elect or designate religious leaders, and to establish and maintain communications with others at the national and international levels.⁷

Clearly, believers in China have not enjoyed the latitude of religious freedom permitted by this U.N. sanctioned provision.

A principle component of the effort to economically pressure China is the status of the United States' economic recognition of China as a Most Favored Nation (MFN). MFN recognition affords China certain advantageous trade rights that nearly all other trading partners with the U.S. have. Since the U.S. is one of the largest importers of China's products, MFN status is very important to China and thus is a powerful instrument of negotiation. The coalition's aim has been to attempt to convince Congress to remove China's MFN status to force religious freedom. In fact this was threatened by the U.S. in 1993 and may explain why human rights conditions in China, though abysmal, have not significantly worsened. Others, however, believed that revoking MFN status would have an opposite result and actually damage efforts toward improvement. This position was supported largely by Christian organizations in direct involvement with China and Christian leaders within the country. They feared a backlash from the government, known to be ruthless with its citizens, to punish those it would hold responsible for loss of MFN status, the Christians themselves. They also believed that the very activities which supported the church and contributed to a more

receptive China would end. A convincing point is that, historically, whenever the U.S. has dealt with China in a more open, pluralistic, and equal manner, the living conditions, economy, human rights and freedoms, including religion, improved.

There is recent evidence that the possible jeopardy of economic favor toward China may be showing some effectiveness in easing the freedom of religion issue. One example indicating Chinese receptiveness to moderating its views on religion when faced with economic pressures is the visit in July, 1997 between Rich Cizik, a policy analyst for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), and Ye Xiaowen, director-general of China's Bureau of Religious Affairs. During the two hour meeting Cizik presented Ye with a list of Chinese Christian leaders known to be under arrest or imprisoned, including an important underground Protestant leader sentenced to execution. Cizik further pressed Ye on the oppressive registration rules and other government imposition. Ye's response was that the individuals were in prison because they were criminals and the government controls were necessary because of the social disorder from the cultural revolution. At this juncture Cizik said he told Ye that "the whole debate over most-favored-nation status for China was animated by the concern of millions of Christians for religious freedom in China. It simply is not possible for our two nations to have normal relations if there continues to be what we regard to be the suppression of the church and persecution of its

leaders.”⁸ Ye then indicated he would investigate the status of the religious leaders on Cizik’s list and extended an invitation, which was accepted, for NAE to visit China and observe.

Other reports including those from the U.S. Department of State (DOS) carried mixed reviews on the progress. In a report released 22 July 1997 the DOS related:

Guided by a central policy directive of October 1996 that launched a national campaign to suppress unauthorized religious groups and social organizations, Chinese authorities in some areas made strong efforts to crack down on the activities of unregistered Catholic and Protestant movements in 1996-1997. They raided and closed several hundred “house church” groups, many with significant memberships, properties, and financial resources. Local authorities used threats, demolition of property, extortion of “fines”, interrogation, detention, and reform-through-education sentences in carrying out this campaign.⁹

A later DOS report released 30 January 1998 reflects some freedom of religion improvements but not without some troublesome factors.

During the year there was a new level of openness to international dialog on religious issues. China invited an increasing number of foreign religious organizations to visit religious sites and talk to official religious leaders and figures. In October the State Council released a white paper on freedom of religious belief. The paper provided official information and statistics on religious practices and defended government policies but stated the premise that legal protection of citizens’ rights should conform to relevant international documents and conventions. It was publicized widely inside and outside China.¹⁰

This same report cited improved economic conditions in China.

China has a mixed economy that continues to expand

rapidly. Economic reforms are raising living standards for many, providing greater independence for entrepreneurs, diminishing state control over the economy and people's daily lives and creating new economic opportunities. Despite economic difficulties in the state sector, individual economic opportunities continue to expand rapidly in nonstate sectors, resulting in increased freedom of employment and mobility.¹¹

Based on previously presented patterns of improved religious freedom and economic progress in China's history, this latter report would indicate that conditions are improving for both. It will be important to continue to monitor the economic and religious freedom relationship to determine if in fact they are progressing. Of even more importance is the nurturing of the relationship to build confidence in China's leadership that as religious freedom expands so will the economy. Although the Chinese government seems to be making some concessions there is no doubt that it is still concerned about its ability to continue to control all aspects of society.

CONCLUSION

"Four years ago, President Clinton laid out his vision of a new Pacific community-a vision that links security interests with economic growth and our commitment to democracy and human rights."¹²

If China's economic power continues to grow as expected U.S. interests will increasingly drive strategy to engage China. But, it must be clear that the U.S. position on and freedom of religion require China to progress toward internationally accepted standards. As stated by President Clinton:

We must pursue a deeper dialogue with China. An isolated, inward-looking China is not good for America or the world. A China playing its rightful role as a responsible and active member of the international community is. I will visit China and I have invited China's president to come here not because we agree on everything, but because engaging China is the best way to work on common challenges such as ending nuclear testing-and to deal frankly with fundamental differences such as human rights.¹³

The thrust of the strategy then should be to focus on improvement of freedom of religion but without demanding compliance with international standards at a rate which would threaten Chinese stability or to move too slowly which might result in a U.S. backlash. The current U.S. position is to continue MFN status for China, but to press for religious freedom through unilateral and multilateral diplomatic processes. Deng's recent death and the uncertain direction his successor may

complicate the issue further. U.S. policy is to engage China on all fronts to promote religious freedom. Much of this activity has occurred through the United Nations Human Rights Committee where most recently the U.S. sponsored a resolution on China's religious freedom situation.¹⁴ The U.S. must take the initiative in preserving the gains that have been made by refraining from overly criticizing China. To do so may cause her to retreat to the old isolationist ways. Although the Chinese have not responded with any great reform, they should understand that they will not realize their fullest economic potential without meaningful progress toward religious freedom.

Word Count: 5,777

ENDNOTES

¹ White House, A National Security Strategy For A New Century, May 1997, 24.

² Colonel Larry M. Wortzel, U.S. Army, interview by author, 12 March 1998, Carlisle, PA.

³ Jonathan D. Spence, The Search For Modern China (New York: Norton, 1990), 170-178.

⁴ Richard T. Phillips, China Since 1911 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 59-83.

⁵ "China: Religious Persecution Persists," Human Rights Watch (December 1995): 3.

⁶ Voice of the Martyrs, "China: Persecution," 13 October 1997; available from <<http://www.vom.org/>>; Internet; accessed 23 February 1998.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, "China Tightens Control on Religion," 21 October 1997; available from <<http://www.hrw.org/>>; Internet; accessed 23 February 1998.

⁸ Tom Strode, "Religious Freedom Growing, Say Chinese; Not So, Say Others," 12 November 1997; available from <<http://www.erlc.com/>>; Internet; accessed 23 February 1998.

⁹ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs, United States Policies in Support of Religious Freedom: Focus on Christians (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 22 July 1997), 18.

¹⁰ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs, China Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 30 January 1998), 15.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹² White House, 23.

¹³ Ibid. ii.

¹⁴ Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs,
United States Policies in Support of Religious Freedom:
Focus on Christians (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of
State, 22 July 1997), 9.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amnesty International. "People's Republic of China: Religious Repression in China." 6 June 1996. Available from <<http://www.amnesty.org//ailib/intcam/china/reltoc.html>>. Internet. Amnesty International. Accessed 10 February 1998.
- Beaver, R. P., ed. Eerdman's Handbook to the World's Religions. Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdman Publishing Co., 1994.
- Bennett, R. K. "The Global Civil War on Christians." Readers' Digest, August 1997.
- Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs. United States Policies in Support of Religious Freedom: Focus on Christians. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 22 July 1997.
- Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor Affairs. China Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 30 January 1998.
- Bureau of Public Affairs. MFN and Religion in China. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of State, 17 June 1997.
- "China: Religious Persecution Persists." Human Rights Watch (December 1995): 1-6.
- Fairbank, John K. The United States and China. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983.
- Goldstein, Avery. "China in 1996." Asian Survey 37, no. 10 (1997): 29-42.
- Harvard Business School. China (A) : The Great Awakening. Boston: Harvard, 1994.
- Human Rights Watch. "China Tightens Control on Religion." 21 October 1997. Available from <<http://www.hrw.org/>>. Internet. Accessed 23 February 1998.
- Li, Cheng. Rediscovering China: Dynamics and Dilemmas of Reform. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997.
- Phillips, Richard T. China Since 1911. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

Spence, Jonathan D. The Search For Modern China. New York:
Norton, 1990.

Strode, Tom "China Intensifies Persecution, Report Says; MFN Battle Begins." 15 September 1997. Available from<<http://www.erlc.com/rilibertry/persecution/1977/66china.html>>. Internet. The Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Accessed 10 February 1998.

Voice of the Martyrs. "China: Persecution." 13 October 1997. Available from <<http://www.vom.org/>>. Internet. Accessed 23 February 1998.

White House. A National Security Strategy For A New Century. May 1997.

Wortzel, Larry M., Faculty Member, U.S. Army War College.
Interview by author, 12 March 1998, Carlisle, PA.

Ziegler, Dominic. "China Survey". The Economist, (8 March 1997): 3-22.